F 1234
.A85913

Class _____

Book _____

PRESENTED BY

_____

The Mexican Revolution and the Nationalization of the Land

The Foreign Interests and Reaction

by

DOCTOR ATL

WHITEHALL BLDG, ROOM 334, NEW YORK
1915

F1234
.A85913

GIH
Mexican Bureau of Information
MAY 8 1915

15-2017

The Mexican Revolution and the Nationalization of the Land

The Foreign Interests and Reaction

by

DOCTOR ATL

This pamphlet is the translation of a speech delivered by Dr. Atl at the "Teatro Principal" in Vera Cruz, December 4th, 1914.

Dr. Atl is very well-known in Mexico, Italy and France as an artist, writer and thinker of great force, originality and talent.

The Nation and its Parties—The Critical Moment for Action.

Rigorously speaking, the political parties in Mexico may be divided into four classes.

The party of Villa, which represents reaction in three forms: specific barbarism, embodied in the primitive man, General Villa; militarism represented by General Angeles, and the capitalist and clerical intrigue synthethized by Dr. Silva, the lawyer Miguel Diaz Lombardo and Somerfeld the Jew.

The party of Zapata, whose existence is due principally to the hunger of the masses and the secular Spanish oppression. The tendencies of this party—although some of its politicians pretend to give it a socialist-revolutionary, or rather syndicalist character—are exclusively communist.

The third division is that of the undecided—the civilians and army-men from all over the Republic who have not had a sufficient understanding of the situation to adopt a course of action and assist in the regeneration of their country.

The fourth class is formed by the party known until now as the Constitutionalist party, and which in spite of its essentially legal name, carries in itself the most fruitful germs of a thorough social reform. Having accomplished the mission of overthrowing General Huerta and annihilating the Federal Army, it must now put into execution in a determined manner, the reforms which the urgent needs of the country demand.

I would ask—"Which of these four groups is able to give, not only to the Nation, but to the whole American Continent, an assurance of moral and material advancement? In which of these parties is the spirit of liberty and justice more deeply rooted?"

National spirit, weak and hesitating, cannot be concretely represented, because a series of disunited manifestations cannot be represented logically and concretely. If these reforms are to produce results they should be made effective in spite of all obstacles put in their way by ancient prejudices, written laws and foreign interests.

The moral, political and military conditions which exist in the Constitutionalist party as present, combine the most aprpopriate means for developing those principles which are to give our country the liberty and prosperity which it has always missed.

A Trinity of Evil-Doers.

Let us analyze at a glance some of the elements composing the Northern Division, which is represented by a trio creative of evil, perpetrator of hideous crimes and protector of all the political and social cast-offs of the past. This Trinity is composed of the lawyer Miguel Diaz Lombardo, a dissipated Jesuit; General Angeles, a man moulded after porfirian ideas—a hypocrite by birth and a soldier by profession; and General Villa, a product of the quaternary period, who, by a phenomenon of retrogression, which after all is no uncommon thing in our country, since we have had to our shame a Porfirio Diaz and a Victoriano Huerta—sprung up from the plains of Chihuahua, bearing all the animal characteristics of the first quadrupeds which inhabited our planet.

These two men and this brute, can neither conceive nor make, any political or social reforms which could tend to benefit a people. They are after individual gain, they defend the interests of corporations which have been the cause in Mexico of political disturbances and the oppression of the people and which are: the clergy, the army and foreign investors.

Diaz Lombardo, a man of unpretentious manners, patient and foxy, has been the intellectual director of Villa's treachery, with General Angeles as a medium. He suggested and guided the acts of General Angeles from the time that Angeles went to Paris with a special commission from General Huerta, and he continued to counsel him from the French Capital by cable and written communications, after General Angeles arrived on the field of action.

I was unable to understand certain strange acts of some of the members of the Revolutionary Committee in Paris and specially of Diaz Lombardo, unil I arrived in Washington in the month of June when the rebellion in Torreon broke out. I then cabled to differet members of the Revolutionary Committee in Paris, and from their replies it was easy to see that Diaz Lombardo and other members of

said Committee had thought it convenient to come out in the open. It was then that Diaz Lombardo decided to return to Mexico so as to exert his influence more directly over Villa and Angeles.

Among other efforts made by these three men to deal a decisive blow to Constitutionalism, there was one feat of a piratical character which came very near being successfully accomplished. Angeles and Diaz Lombardo, feigning great zeal for the Constitutionalist cause, for which they claimed to be working, took steps to purchase a steamer in Italy for the sum of £100,000—sterling, with the idea of fitting it out for war, and taking possession of Matamoros and Tampico by surprise. This scheme came very near being successful, and Diaz Lombardo himself was getting ready to go and put himself at the head of the expedition, dreaming dreams of himself as the modern Conqueror of the New World! Unfortunately for them, the Cientificos taking part in this enterprise were distrustful, either of the seamanship of Diaz Lombardo, or of Villa's docility, or they could not get together sufficient money to buy the phantom ship. But the fact remains that the deal was almost put through and that a commission of foreigners left Paris to go to Genoa to inspect the ship, take possession of it and set out for Mexico. Had this feat been realized, what an interesting account of "Pirates in Frock-coats" Venegas Arroyo might have written for us!

Diaz Lombardo has been an unlucky star to our country, both in his administrative and individual activities during the revolutionary period following the overthrow of General Diaz. Two facts supply ample proof of this: his recommending or rather imposing General Huerta on Madero as Chief of the Army, and his introducing General Angeles in the Constitutionalist party. The two proteges of the Ex-Secretary of the Educational Department have produced two national catastrophes.

The Northern Faction an Obstacle to Liberty and Justice.

To describe Villa would be a useless task. If all his actions did not suffice to bring to light the barbarism of this Neanderthal savage, the declarations made by General Alvarado and the photograph accompanying same, plainly reveal the character of the individual whom the capitalist-clerical-military league are using as a tool to drag the country back into another and a worse state of oppression. This photograph published by General Alvarado, is the most stinging accusation ever made against the leader of a party. The synthetic force and indisputable exactness of photographic art have made in this instance a more clear and convincing illustration than could have been made by the most accomplished caricaturist of our times. As to General Angeles, the fact that he is an Indian, brought up in military training during the time of General Diaz, is sufficient to understand that behind his apparent modesty and discipline, hides the hand of a tyrant.

Besides the three men just described, there are in the Northern Division, as everybody knows, a great many lawyers, commission merchants, newspaper men, and ambitious Mexicans and foreigners, representing everything under the sun, except the interests of the nation.

Moreover the Northern Division, apart from its political and clerical tendencies, and of being the genuine representative of international capitalism, carries in itself as its primal reason of existence, the pretorian spirit of most abject militarism. This alone would suffice to issue its death-warrant.

If the Diaz-Lombardo-Angeles-Villa facton were able to obtain preponderance in our country, it would be preferable for the sake of civilization in general and for our reputation in particular, to make of our whole country, one great, big bonfire. To crush that faction, even at the risk of being crushed ourselves, is not only our duty to our country, but it is also our duty to humanity. Its growth would be a serious obstacle to the cause of Liberty, Justice and Progress in America.

The Biggest Error of the Zapatistas.

The Zapatistas committed the grave error of allying themselves with Villa. The principles of the Zapatistas and Villistas are antithetical. The Revolution of the South is a violent outbreak of an intense popular need; it commands respect in spite of its errors and it is just although transgressions might have been committed in its name. It is the spontaneous manifestation of an oppressed people, generated by hunger and secular oppression.

The Northern Division is the champion of the interests of foreign capitalists, the shield of the clergy and the embryo of militarism. How did it happen that the men of the South entered into an alliance with their own enemies? I believe this alliance can be explained as the result of a simple grudge. Spite felt by the men of the southern faction because the Constitutionalists passed them unnoticed without asking them to take part in the provisional Government which was established in Mexico at the exit of Carvajal.

When on October last, General Zapata told me of his intention to ally himself to General Villa, I did everything in my power to make him give up this idea, but my efforts were fruitless, as were also those of some of his followers, who were opposed to an alliance with Villa. The cleverness and perseverance of General Villa's agents had already misled the freedom-loving tendencies of the healthy element of the Southern Revolution, and had even got General Zapata's intransigence to yield.

This intransigence of General Zapata, which remained unabated in the face of five presidents—this intransigence, which was the fruit of a great faith and which constituted an undeniable moral strength

succumbed in a moment of political sentimentalism, and by an irony of fate, fell precisely into the hands of the one enemy of the southern revolution, and that is: reaction.

What occurred in connection with the Zapatistas, can be compared to a not uncommon phenomenon sometimes seen in the human body. When a part of the human mechanism does not perform its duty, it stiffens and becomes paralyzed. Zapata's army, secluded in the mountains was anxious to do its duty in national politics—but intercourse being cut off between them and the other national movement, when their time came for doing their duty to the nation, they were unfit for the part, deprived of political tactics. And the intellects of the Southern Revolution were tangled up in the affair, and thus used, through the craft of Angeles and Villa.

Zapatismo, which was for more than five years the most genuine revolutionary movement of our history, rapidly changed into a dangerous element of reaction, because of the assistance it is giving the Northern Division, and because the elements of intense fanatism which it carries might assume gigantic proportions in a short time.

Zapatismo and Villismo united form an indefensible anomaly.

From the view-point of principle and also from a military point of view, there are only two solutions possible; either the partial absorption of the revolutionary groups of the south by Villismo, or the sudden disintegration of the elements which pretend to form this new league, which might be given the absurd title of "Military Libertarian." In either case, reaction will have gained ground.

Those forming the undecided, hesitating portion, who during social perturbations constitute the wavering mass which may at any moment go to swell the ranks of one or the other side—these slowly make up their minds to join one or the other, but not until they have made sure which side will come out victorious.

Large is the number of men on whom the republic had built great hopes, who have succumbed in a moment of political unconsciousness, and how many popular groups, carried away by the treachery of one man, have made an obstacle, however transient, to the onward march of progress! The Revolution should knock at the conscience of these men and these groups—the spirit of justice, the cause, demand it!

Constitutionalism Alone can Guarantee the Rights of the People.

The fourth category is the Constitutionalist party, which combines military and intellectual elements, vivified by the true revolutionary spirit. This is the party that can guarantee to the oppressed land of Anahuac, the well-being and rights of its inhabitants, but this with the condition that the reforms to be made shall be thoroughly and rapidly executed.

The Constitutionalist party is, among all those taking part in the present struggle, the one that best understands the interests of the people. The men surrounding the First Chief are those who have most to heart, the desire of satisfying the people's requirements and the military element which surrounds him is also the one which can successfully eliminate all obstacles which oppose the realization of the reforms demanded by the people.

The First Chief stated in a clear and definite manner, the very night he arrived in Vera Cruz "To-day begins the social revolution." This is well understood by some of the most valuable military and civil elements who, arriving in this heroic little city from the capital, have firmly decided to collaborate with him. But at the present moment, the party lacks cohesion—its acts are not unanimous, either from a political, or military point of view.

This is a critical moment for the nation and also for the party! It is now that we must keep our minds clear and our pulses firm, so that we may be able to steer clear of the rocks! I know well that in the strong hearts and healthy minds of the brave men who are used to wrestling with nature in the mountains and forests, a ruling tendency to righteousness predominates—the kind of righteousness that will help to clear the chaos of the present situation, but I also know that if all the parts that form the whole do not work in harmony, and if each man or group of men tries to impose his views—if the efforts are not united and strong and do not act independently of existing prejudgments and interests, the struggle will be prolonged indefinitely, and when we look for the body of the Nation, in order to heal its wounds, we shall find instead.....a corpse.

We have made mistakes, and some of them serious—as is that of not having proclaimed the nationalization of the lands—agrarian question—as is also that of having tolerated the interference of foreign nations in our interior affairs (tacit consent of foreign intervention) also having neglected the propaganda of our views, in our own country and throughout the world: dangerous neglect, which our enemies have intelligently used to their advantage.

The solutions found for the agrarian problem are very vague. Programs for the solution of this same question in different countries where the same difficulty has come up, may be divided into three different headings.

The first and simplest is the one which tries to solve the problem by the law; respecting the rights of proprietorship and permitting the wealthy to remain the owners of the lands, without giving the people who work these lands the slightest possibility of ever coming into the possession of that which rightfully belongs to them. This program, as well as all those where Law is brought to bear, is altogether out of the question and cannot even be considered by the Revolution.

The next and second soluton is that by which all lands and properties seized are returned to their owners, whether they be cor-

porations or individuals, and which provides for the confiscation of lands not cultivated, which are to be divided among the people.

The third and best solution is the one that a social revolution should propose to carry out, and that is: the nationalization of the land. This is the program that our revolution should adopt. Like all great transformations, this solution frightens the Revolutionists themselves. But it is the right one, and why hesitate? All the land, from Bravo to Yucatan, should be confiscated in the name of the people and this regardless of individual rights or foreigners' properties. Why should we respect the concessions made to Pearson, or the wholesale robberies of Inigo Noriega, or the usurpation of natives and foreigners in Morelos, in Puebla, and lastly of the neo-Cientificos in the States of Chihuahua and Durango?

International complications should not deter us. In the first place we have the right to do justice, and secondly—at present the European nations are sufficiently occupied in settling their complicated and somewhat dubious affairs, to attempt to interfere with us while we accomplish the noblest act of social justice done in these modern times!

Some other time I shall explain in detail, my idea for the nationalization of the lands.

The Problem of Distribution of Lands Does Not Exist.

If we are to believe history, we are now at the most opportune moment in which to realize the dream of free men, who in all the ages have protested—from either a philosophical or scientific, or practical point of view—against the monstrous injustice of the earth being monopolized for the benefit of those who do not work it. It is our sacred duty to accomplish a task of national recovery—which is at the same time an act of elevated and practical philanthropy. International Socialism—which comprises a large number of clear-minded men who are struggling for economic equality in every country—will assist us in our task.

In Mexico, we would never arrive at a just and final solution of what is called the "agrarian problem" if we satisfy ourselves with handing back to the different localities and townships, the properties taken from them—and with confiscating the properties held by the favourites of Diaz, Huerta or Villa.

As a matter of fact, the problem of the distribution of lands does not exist—but there exists the complicated problem of "the distribution of the land." The land that has been abused, confiscated, trampled underfoot, covered with blood, for the exclusive benefit of a group of native and foreign promoters, who squander in the decorating of a palatial residence of vulgar taste, or in the cabarets of Montmartre the hard-gained earnings of a people who has been going hungry for the last three hundred years!

This hunger of the mases is precisely the biggest factor of all national revolutions. If we have not the courage to give the people what belongs to them by natural rights and by the rights of conquest—for it is they who cultivate the earth and make it yield—they will continue to clamor, always and forever, for that which is unquestionably theirs. We must not hesitate any longer—injustice has reigned supreme long enough—let us now deal justice to them. Justice must be done now, and it must be done quickly. And we must give the people the land not according to the theories of Kropotkin, or the resolutions of the legislators of New Zealand, or the decision of a magnanimous Russian monarch, or following the theories of this or that French or German socialist, or following the wise suggestions of some group of bankers, or some economist on the style of Leroy-Beaulieu—NO—WE MUST GIVE THE LAND TO THE PEOPLE FOLLOWING THE ONE AND ONLY LAW WHICH SHOULD GOVERN THE PROPRIETORSHIP OF THE LAND—"The earth belongs to him who works it."

And here in Mexico the land is not tilled by Inigo Noriega, nor Pablo Macedo, nor the Pearson people—it is worked by eight million men, who are nevertheless, homeless and starving, and who are given the right to live, only in order to be made slaves in the name of foreign diplomacy, or to be degraded in the interests of public peace.

Nature gives every man the right to a piece of land.

That former generations have not been able to enforce this right, is no reason why WE should not proclaim it and enforce it, in spite of all written laws, ancestral prejudices, or the phantom fear of international intervention.

A Shameful Tutelage.

If the European nations ever should dare to intervene with armed forces in Mexico, such an intervention would not be more degrading to our dignity, nor more harmful to our interests, than is the vicious pressure exercised by them from the time of General Diaz. This illegal pressure is nothing more nor less than a shameful tutelage, or, to express it more clearly, a political intervention which grievously harms the honor of the nation and the welfare of its inhabitants.

While we remain under this influence, and in fear of the threat of European powers, we shall be able to make no useful reforms of a comprehensive nature, and the whole life of the nation will continue to depend on the unsatiable ambition of an oil-developig firm, and on the grasping insolence of a group of Spaniards.

Without quoting any isolated facts to show to what a degree Mexico has been under foreign influence, it will be sufficient to recall that when Madero's Government was overthrown, a government which was essentially popular, the foreign diplomats in Mexico contributed to a great extent, both morally and materially, to this overthrow—

and the recognition of General Huerta as president, and his duration in power, was due to the influence of the Pearson people in London.

"There is no doubt, affirms the SUN, that great efforts were made in England to force the Minister of Foreign Relations to come to an agreement with the present Mexican Government. No one is ignorant of the fact that the British Minister of Foreign Relations was acting under secret orders as regards Huerta's recognition, and the fact of Huerta remaining always very friendly to that nation, is no secret. Everyone may draw his own conclusions, but one might ask without indiscretion if the Oil concessions given to the English company were not a part of the agreement."

Great Britain had changed the system of fueling her navy, substituting petroleum for coal. Petroleum could not be found cheap and in sufficiently great quantities, in Russia or the Balkans, so the Pearson people devoted long years and large sums of money to find oil deposits in Mexico. They found them, and the Diaz' administration gave them fabulous concessions: The improvement of the port of Vera Cruz, and the right to work, in conditions which were ruinous for Mexico, the oil-lands of the States of Vera Cruz and Tamaulipas.

When Diaz fell, the Revolutionary Government annulled the concessions given to the Pearson people. Madero was an obstacle in the way of the ambitions of the British company, and of the needs of the British fleet. The diplomatic corps in the capital vilely aided the English representative and Lane Wilson, U. S. Ambassador.

When Victoriano Huerta took the reins of the government, he was immediately recognized by the British Government and everyone will recall how this recognition of the British Government caused much surprise in all the political circles of Europe, which gave rise to an appeal by the House of Commons on the 8th of July, 1913. This appeal, voiced by Mr. Johnson Hinks, brought no satisfactory reply. Huerta not only confirmed to Lord Cowdray the concessions given by Diaz, but he gave new privileges to Lord Cowdray himself as well as to his representatives, the Belgian syndicates and European ministers.

These concessions were so exorbitant that Lord Charles Beresford declared, on August 17th, 1914, that any other Government outside of Huerta's was entitled to revise the concessions to Lord Cowdray, because they were onerous and scandalous.

The permanence of General Huerta in power is due mostly to the diplomatic and financial assistance of the Pearson people, for it was through them that General Huerta was able to obtain in Europe, money, arms and official protection. But we must add that the official circles of Germany gave efficient help to the usurper, and we shall not forget that it was the Emperor of Germany who lent to his colleague, Victoriano Huerta, a German warship which enabled Huerta to elude the punishment he so well deserved!

These underhand transactions are nothing short of an actual intervention in our interior affairs, and are infinitely more harmful to our

national dignity and interests, than was the occupation of the port of Vera Cruz by the American troops.

Let us therefore defy the threats of Europe, and tear the mask off the faces of these foreign commercial intriguers! This is the only way in which we shall be able to make in our country, the economic, political and social reforms which the nations has been demanding for so many years.

Propaganda Has Strengthened Reaction.

To make our actions more effective, we must diffuse our principles throughout the country, and organize an extensive propaganda in defense of our ideas, in our own country and also outside—similar to what is being done by Argentina.

The reaction which has sprung up and which is headed to-day by Villa and Angeles, has made itself known, not in the battles of Torreon and Zacatecas, but by its propaganda in the United States, Paris and London. The conditions of modern life make it impossible to bring a campaign of any kind to a successful end, without the aid of the press.

The publicity we give our revolution in foreign countries, will reflect back upon our own country, after gaining the sympathy and assistance of the world, which it richly deserves.

From the time of Francisco Madero, international propaganda in favor of the Revolution has been neglected. From 1913 to 1914, when I was carrying on a revolutionary publicity campaign in Paris, I was able to fathom the political importance which the press and public opinion have in the success of enterprises of any kind, not excepting those of a political and social nature. If in Europe, America and Asia, we do not proclaim and defend, the nobleness of our principles and the aims of our Revolution—after mastering our own country, we shall find difficulties awaiting us on the outside which will not be easily overcome. The publicity and information service organized by our enemies in the United States and Europe, have done much harm to our cause.

The Effects of our Revolution may attain a World-Wide Importance.

The Mexican Revolution is one of the keenest manifestations of the world's conflict. It portrays the character of the conflagration that is so violently shaking the world. The telluric, racial, economic and political conditions of Mexico, put us in a position to solve, in a satisfactory manner and for the benefit of the whole continent, the great social problems which confront us. The reforms effected in Mexico by this revolutionary movement, may serve the world as an example of a true social renovation and true justice, and our action may attain universal importance, if we make it thorough and unprejudiced.

The disintegrations which have taken place within the revolution must not frighten or discourage us—they are the inevitable consequence of the deep commotion of the whole organism. In other words: a natural selection of the different elements which constitute the character, aspirations, ambitions and needs—the life—of the race.

The one essential thing is that during these commotions, the men and the principles which must guide the afflicted conscience of the nation, remain unshaken.

"The social revolution is going to begin" has said the First Chief—but how?

We are not confronting an ideological problem. We have before us real necessities which must be analyzed fearlessly and firmly, and we must find for these necessities, not arbitrary solutions, as required by one group or another, but solutions which will completely satisfy the irresistible necessities of the whole nation.

If the program we adopt satisfies completely the necessities of the masses, all the world will second our efforts. But if we fear to destroy the past and do not act regardless of created interests—if we fear to trample down barbarous beliefs and mercenary diplomats and limit ourselves to partial reforms of existing evils, and weakly considerations—the world will either freeze us with its indifference or oppose our action—and the people of Mexico will continue to bear the yoke of oppression and misery in the midst of a fruitless struggle!

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 015 830 586 0